

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action, claims 1, 5-8, 11, 15-16, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Admitted Prior Art in view of Liu, et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,319,821). Submitted herewith are the declarations under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 of the one of the named inventors, Christian Zistl, and of the undersigned agent that recite facts that establish that the Liu patent is not prior art to the present application.


More particularly, the declarations establish that, prior to April 24, 2000, the filing date of the Liu patent, the invention disclosed in the pending application was conceived and that all parties involved in preparing and filing the patent application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office were diligent. Accordingly, the Liu patent is not prior art to the present application. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejections of claims 1, 5-8, 11, 15-16, and 20 be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 2-4, 9-10, 12-14, and 17-19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that these claims contain allowable subject matter. In view of the above discussion, Applicants submit that the base claims are allowable and therefore claims 2-4, 9-10, 12-14, and 17-19 are allowable. Applicants request that the Examiner's objections to claims 2-4, 9-10, 12-14, and 17-19 be withdrawn.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all claims pending in the present application are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (713) 934-4052 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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